



Omaha Atari Computer Enthusiasts

Volume 5 Issue 6

June 1987

Wednesday, JUNE 10
MONTHLY MEETING
La Vista Recreation Center
7:00 P.M.

**THERE WILL BE NO
SIG MEETINGS
UNTIL FURTHER
NOTICE**

OLD BUSINESS

The May meeting was started at 7:35 by the club president, Jamie Blinn.

first order of business was the monthly door prize selections. This months winners were Glen Flint and Jim Herrington, who was not present to receive his prize.

Following the door prize selection the clubs' proposed constitution was discussed and handed out for examination. The May newsletter was then reviewed followed by an update on the 8-bit library.

Club librarian, Axel Ricker, informed the club that the May 8-bit disk of the month contained ShopTool, a program to convert PrintShop graphics to Atari DOS format and vice versa-for easy transferring of graphics between owners of PrintShop, as well as a label creating program and several graphic demos. Axel then stated that a disk consisting of Disk Utilities should be available at the June meeting.

PROGRAMMING CONTEST

Jamie Blinn announced that the club would be holding a programming contest and that the final details on the contest would be given at the June meeting. Jamie did state that the program must be written in BASIC and that the program would be judged on functionality, creativity, and ease of use. The program would have to be turned in at the July meeting and a prize would be given for the best program within each division: ST and 8-Bit. The BASIC languages allowed are:

ST - any BASIC

8-Bit - Turbo Basic, Basic XL or XE, and Atari Basic

NEW PRODUCT DEMOS

Donna Griggs demonstrated Zobian's RAT along with the RAT'S operating system-RAOS. The RAT is a mouse controller for the 8-Bit computers and RAOS is a disk operating system that allows you to choose disk functions by moving an icon over the specific function with the RAT and pressing a button on the RAT, this is similar to using the mouse on the ST computers. The RAT can also be used with your own programs.

Deane Bolin demonstrated GFA Basic for the ST and spoke about some of the commands of GFA Basic as well as the speed of the language. The demo programs shown were fast and impressive.

Peter Killian briefly demonstrated E-Z Calc, a GEM based spreadsheet, as well as a program to print out certificates-ala PrintShop.

NEW PRODUCTS REVIEWED

Beverly Hagen gave a brief review of EZ Track, a MIDI software product by Hybrid Arts that is a 20 track polyphonic recorder used with a keyboard connected to an ST.

Lance Summers gave a brief overview of the new revision of Happy Software 7.1, which will allow a Happy modified disk drive to read text files from any IBM single density disk and then convert them to Atari format and vice versa.

NEXT MONTH'S DEMOS

Next month the club hopes to have a MIDI demonstration as well as a CAD 3-D demonstration.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

July Expirations: Larry Parthum and Denny Rourke

CES Show

A Review by Axel Ricker

The CES show was rather dull this year. Computer stuff took a rear seat this year for hardly any company was there. Commodore didn't even raise its head. Atari was there but the only new item was a true double density/double sided 5 1/2 inch disk drive that will be a replacement model for the 1050 at the same price range. It will be about 2 1/2 times as fast and come with a new DOS. They decided to go this route when they couldn't get people to develop software for their 3 1/2 inch drive that they were developing.

Both the 80 column board and the 1200 baud modem are in production and should hit the stores in the next month or so. The new drive will be out by Christmas but we all know Atari's promises. For the ST, nothing new. There were no Mega machines present nor could one get info about the blitter chip. They were going to answer all questions at the CLAUG Club meeting the eve of the first but I couldn't stay in Chicago that long.

Atari had a demo made with Cybermate running that was really good. A Breakout type game was running using stereo glasses but on the whole the exhibit was boring.

The biggest news was that Electronic Arts had purchased Batteries Included this last week but their exhibit was still minuscule. Who knows what will come from this union. Maybe this will make E.A. pay more attention to future Atari products since many of the people they got through this alliance are very Atari oriented. At least we can hope.

Some new software includes:

Accolade's Ace of Aces for the 8-bit (a good graphics flying game where one has to bomb a dam), and Test Drive for the ST (this will allow you to test drive 4-5 of the top sport cars available with each handling like the real thing).

Epyx will be producing Boulder Dash Construction Kit and Spy vs. Spy III (I thought I and II were enough) for the 8-bit.

Xanth will produce Midi Maze (a rage at most of the recent computer shows for being able to hook up to 16 ST machines and have them play against each other in a maze shoot out game). Hopefully we can get enough ST's together some day at a meeting to be able to have a tournament. Otherwise not much new.

The biggest exhibits went to Sega & Nintendo who seem to be riding a resurgence in popularity of home gaming machines. Atari plans on joining this fray with its XE videogame system which is to begin shipping units in June, though none were in evidence at the show. It will come with 3 game cartridges: Flight Simulator, Missile Command and a shooting game. Retail price of \$160. It will come with 64K, an attachable game playing keyboard, video gun and joystick. There is rumor that these cartridges may work on our 8 bit machines but we'll just have to see, though this is hard to believe since the game machines have a new graphics chip.

My favorite exhibits were the Sega and Nintendo booths. There games were incredible and almost every software company we all know and love were creating new games for them. The incredible games were those that ran what they call their mega cartridges. They have two that each contain 2 megabyte which were far better graphics than I've ever seen. Come to the meeting and I'll be showing some of the material I bought back.

ROGUE HINTS & TRICKS

By Donna Griggs

The following tips are ones that I have discovered through many hours of play. I hope that they will help you in your quest for the jewels of Yendor.

First of all, there are tactics to defeat any monster in the game--you must discover by trial and error the appropriate tactic for destroying or avoiding each. Thus frequent saves are in order so you can experiment. If one method doesn't work, reload the game and try another. If all else fails, try a potion to haste self and outrun the creature. If you walk into a room and the creature there does not immediately begin following you, it is probably asleep and most often is better left that way. Collect the gold and any other treasures there and exit, especially if you are in the deeper levels of the dungeons where the creatures are much stronger and faster. If you must fight them, first clear the rest of the level and save the game, then go back and tackle it.

Your most precious possessions will be your food and magic, so use them sparingly. They will get increasingly scarce as you descend lower and lower in the dungeon. Wait until you faint 4-5 times before eating and save wands and staves for the really tough creatures (trolls, jabberwocks, ur-villes, medusas, dragons, griffins, etc.). Scrolls are an exception to the rule since they are most often helpful. They should be read at the first opportunity--I usually read them at the beginning of each new level in case one is a scroll of mapping.

Some scrolls and potions identify themselves as soon as they are used; others don't. If you read a scroll and it says "Weapon gives off a flash of white light", it is a scroll of vorpalize weapon. If it says "Weapon glows blue", it is a scroll of enchant weapon. If it says "Nothing on paper to read" or doesn't give any message at all, it is a scroll of blank paper. If it says "Nose tingles as you sense food", it is a scroll of food detection. If you see "You fall asleep", it is a scroll of sleep. If it says "You hear laughter in the distance", it is a scroll of scare monster. If it says "scroll vanishes as you are reading it", it is a scroll of teleportation or of create monster.

If "Armor glows faintly", it is a scroll of enchant armor. If it says "This scroll has a map on it", it is a scroll of magic mapping. If it says "You now have the power of identification", it is a scroll of identify. If it says "Hands glow red", it is a scroll of monster confusion. If "You hear a high pitched humming noise", it is a scroll of aggravate monster. If "you feel as if someone is watching you", it is a scroll of remove curse. And finally, if you see "You hear a cry of anguish in the distance", it is a scroll of hold monster.

Enchanted weapons kill easier so save these scrolls for the deeper levels. Enchanted armor is harder for rattlesnakes and aquators to destroy or weaken. Save the scrolls of remove curse for those times when you change armor and find it is cursed and can not be removed. Scrolls of magic mapping should be used when you have searched a room and can find no way out or have cleared a level and can find no way down or up. Scrolls of identify should be used on potions, rings, and wands. If you only have one and need to identify several things, save the game BEFORE using, then reload and identify one thing, reboot and identify another and repeat until all have been identified, then reboot one final time, leaving an intact scroll for your next treasure needing identification. Save teleportation scrolls for when you have entered a room filled with monsters or have encountered a creature you know you are not strong enough to defeat or do not have the right weapon to defeat. Try to drop all scrolls of create monster unless in the early levels of the game where you can build up experience or hit points.

Again, due to the high mortality rate of your character, save your game at completion of each level. During the lower levels it may be prudent to save after every 2-3 rooms cleared. When the disk is through accessing, remove it from the drive and write protect it, then restore the game, CANCEL when the alert box opens, and proceed to the next level. If you are killed, the machine tries to erase your character from the disk, but by using the write protect button, it is prevented from doing so and you will be only one level from your termination point when you reboot.

If you quaff (drink) unidentified potions, and receive a message, this will help: "You feel stronger"--potion of gain

strength, "You feel warm all over"-restore strength, "You're confused" or notice that your character is moving erratically-potion of confusion, "You can't move"-paralysis, "you feel sick"-potion of poison, "You feel better"-healing, "You feel much better"-extra healing, "This potion tastes like slime mold juice"-potion of see invisible, "You suddenly feel more skillful"-raise level, "You feel yourself moving much faster"-haste self, "A cloak of darkness falls around you"-blindness, "You sense the presence of magic"-magic detection, "This potion has an extremely dull taste"-quench thirst, and finally, if no message is displayed, it is a potion of monster detection.

Since wands and staves which shoot magic can ricochet, stand on a diagonal to your opponent before zapping him. Wands of polymorphing are dangerous to use on lower levels as a monster could be changed to something more powerful, however, in the deepest levels, they frequently make monsters less formidable.

Try to fight aquators which rust your armor from a distance else remove your armor to fight. These are frequently found behind doors or in dark rooms, so if possible, light up your rooms.

Since rings affect your survival by increasing your digestion (you could starve to death while wearing one if food is scarce), wear only when absolutely necessary and remove at the earliest opportunity. Items of WILD MAGIC are unpredictable and uncontrollable and usually work to your disadvantage, so if you must use it, save the game first. It occasionally will turn out to be tremendously beneficial but these are few and far between.

Last, if you enter a room that has a large number of monsters (or 2-3), try to exit just outside the door and wait for the creatures to emerge one at a time; they will be easier to kill and the hit points mount quickly. If none emerge through the door, re-enter the door and stand in it as you fight the creatures and you will be protected except from behind. Seldom have I been attacked from behind but when I have been, usually 1-2 blows is all that is necessary then resume your forward attack.

Enjoy your game, and get the jewels of Yendor, and return to the surface!

THIS 'N THAT

by Donna Griggs

As promised, here is the rest of the new titles for the 8-bit machine that I am now aware of.

From Accolade comes HARDBALL, a 1-2 player baseball simulation with excellent 3-D graphics with views from several different angles. Although it does not use actual Pro teams, it does offer substitutions, defensive shifts, 8 types of pitches, offensive and fielding choices, base running options, steals, and bunting. \$35.

Broderbund's BRIMSTONE is an advanced interactive text adventure game where Sir Gawain, knight of King Arthur's Round Table, must escape from the realm of Ulro with the five mystical words. It requires 2 disk drives. A book introduces the game which has a vocabulary of over 1200 words and the character must then make his way through labyrinths filled with hazards. \$40.

Electronic Arts offers 2 titles:

CHESSMASTER 2000, a 2-D chessboard with on-screen chess clock and showing captured pieces. It has 12 levels of difficulty, a 'Teach' mode showing possible moves, suggestions for best move, allows taking back moves, changing sides at any time, playing against the computer or a friend, and has a library of 100 classic games. \$40.

RACING DESTRUCTION SET is an introductory level racing game for 1-2 players with split screen 3-D scrolling graphics, 9 vehicles (rated for type, tire type, and engine size), optional land mines, oil for slicks, armor, and crusher, 50 track layouts, and a design feature to set up new ones. Multiple scenarios. \$12.

WORLD KARATE CHAMPIONSHIP by Epyx is an introductory level fast action karate game where the characters figure in 8 different international settings. Excellent graphics, 16 different karate moves, tests of skill, and progressively more difficult opponents are offered. \$30.

LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS, an Infocom text adventure spoof of 1930's science fiction pulp fiction, offers 3 playing levels (tame, suggestive, and lewd). You've been snatched out of your favorite bar in Upper Sandusky, Ohio in order to save the world from the evil Leather Goddesses, who want to turn all Earthlings into sex slaves. Includes a 3-D comic book, 3-D glasses, a scratch and sniff card, and a map of the catacombs. \$35.

CLASH OF WILLS from DKG is a WWII simulation similar graphically to Chris Crawford's Eastern Front and takes place in Europe from May, 1940 to the end of the war. The map covers from England to Russia and from Norway to North Africa. The Germans try to overrun Europe while the Allies try to prevent this and conquer Germany. Has air war, strategic and tactical movement, production, amphibious invasions, sea movement and weather. \$40

Also from DKG is METZ/COBRA which covers 2 WWII battles in France during 1944. Cobra covers the Allied breakout from Normandy in August of 1944. Metz covers Patton's attempt to take the French city of Metz in September 1944 and push on into Germany before the autumn rains came. Both games have scrolling maps with units representing regiments. Includes rules for weather, air power, visibility, supply, and artillery. 2 scenarios. \$40.

OBJECTIVE KURSK by DKG covers the battle for the Russian city of Kursk, July 1943. \$40. HOLLYWOOD HIJINX by Infocom is a text adventure where the character has to find 10 treasures in a mysterious house. \$35. OGRE by Origin Systems is a futuristic armored combat tank simulation based on the popular boardgame. \$40.

... be released by June 30 are:
ALTERNATE REALITY-THE DUNGEON (\$40),
AUTODUEL (\$50), BATTLECRUISER (\$60),
BUREAUCRACY (\$35), & GUDERIAN (\$30).
No further details available on these games at present. See future columns.

HOW TO LOAD PROBLEM DISKS

by Lance Summers

1. Turn off all equipment (TV or monitor not necessary).
2. Turn drive(s) on.
3. Turn on peripherals you expect to use (modem, printer, etc.).
4. Place disk to load in drive 1.
5. Steps to follow until disk loads:
 - a. Turn on computer with option pressed.
 - b. Wait a few minutes even though the drive has stopped, for the program may still be initializing.
 - c. If the program won't load, try turning the computer back off, then back on, leaving option unpressed.
 - d. If the program still won't load, then boot the HAPPY software (must be a HAPPY drive):
 1. Select #1 to get options menu.
 2. Select #1 from this menu to turn Happy off and obtain normal drive speed.
 - e. Repeat from step 5a.
 - f. If the program still won't load, load Translator disk and repeat from step 5a.
 - g. If it is a Basic program and it still won't load, find an old Basic cartridge and insert it into the computer, then repeat from step 5c.
 - h. If it still won't load, then boot a working DOS and look to see if there are loadable files on the problem disk using the 'L' option.
6. If none of these work, your file is probably not recoverable using normal means.

Good luck!

STidbits

by Peter R. Killian

dBMAN HINTS

The language interpreter that comes with dBMAN is one of its best properties. It even becomes more useful with the built-in editor that comes with version 3.0. Unfortunately, I have had some problems with it in the past. For a long time, I could not figure out a common denominator in my difficulties (besides my lack of programming skill, that is). I finally found one after a while. It seems that the command interpreter gets lost if the last line in the program does not end with a normal carriage return/line feed. I had been deleting the blank lines at the end of my files and, since I started making sure there was at least one blank line at the end, I have had a lot fewer mysterious program crashes.

The following code segment stores a date in common every day English:

* Procedure to store verbal version of date

```
Store " Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday "
+;
"Thursday Friday Saturday " to Day_Names
Store " January February March April
May" +;
" June July August September
October" +;
" November December " to Mnth_Names
Store TRIM(SUBSTR(Mnth_Names,10*Month(x.date),10)) to
Cur_Month
Store TRIM(SUBSTR(Day_Names,DOW(x.date)*10,10)) + " " to
Cur_WkDay
Store STR(Day(x.date),3) to Cur_Day
Store STR(YEAR(x.date),5) to Cur_Year
Store Cur_WkDay + Cur_Month + Cur_Day + "," + Cur_Year to
datestring
RETURN
```

The above routine can also be used as a procedure within a larger file if it is preceded with the key word PROCEDURE. The normal version will be stored in the variable 'datestring'.

NEW GAME

Over the weekend, I indulged myself in a new game for the ST. The game is called 'Ninja Mission' and it is marketed by a company called Mastertronic. The game is a martial arts arcade-style one with the hero controlled by either the keyboard or a joystick plugged into the second joystick port. It has a catchy tune that is played when you first start the game and also when you complete a screen of play. For me, the game has an addictive quality, but it would, I think, likely become boring to an arcade junkie. So far, I have found the only variation, besides the three different types of opponents, from one screen to another is the number and strength of those opponents. Despite this monotony, I like the feel of the game, its graphic images, and the music. If you are not an arcade fanatic, I would recommend this as a pleasant occasional diversion.

Club Library News

By Axel Ricker

Well, this month I do have good news to report. We have a lot of new disks and there should be something to interest everyone.

We have finally gotten the April Analog disk and the May and June Antic disks. Our second Printshop disk is full and anyone buying the 2nd one will receive a listing of the names of both the 1st and 2nd Printshop disks. I've also put together a disk with 2 pinball games and a game called Pachinko. If anyone knows how to play this old marble game we sure would like some instructions and then we could print them in the next newsletter.

I also hope to put together a graphics disk of my best graphic programs. Hopefully in the future I'll still get together a pictures disk but as I've said in the past, this will depend on the response I get from these attempts. We also hope to get a disk swap going with the Atari club in Lincoln.

THAT WAS THE ATARI EMULATOR THAT WAS

by JOHN NAGY (C.H.A.O.S.)

An "800" emulator for the ST is a reality! I have seen it and talked to the author. DAREK MIHOCKA of the LONDON, ONTARIO area, has written and distributed several levels of beta test versions on BBS's. He originally planned to make an emulator for just about all the 6502 machines, but has since broken the emulations into separate versions for the APPLE][, the ATARI, and soon the COMMODORE 64. (YIKE!).

The version I saw ran no graphics and did not support DOS functions. But in a telephone interview on February 22, Darek, a 20-year college student at Waterloo University outside Toronto, told me that he has now developed the emulation to produce all graphics modes, DOS support, and even DISPLAY LIST! Still to be developed are PLAYER MISSILE GRAPHICS and SOUND. Additionally, there seems to be a string handling bug in the ATARI 8-bit BASIC emulation but Darek expects to have that corrected shortly. Ultimately he plans to have the emulation good enough to run commercial heavy-graphics software.

At this point, the emulation runs about 1/4 the speed of "normal" 8-bit execution, as the emulation is an interpreter. Plans for commercial distribution (and in fact ANY distribution) are now sketchy, because of... guess who?

ATARI CORP. ... who WON'T allow the emulator to be

distributed. The problem is that Darek's program uses the ATARI (copyrighted) operating system and ATARI BASIC. ATARI says this is PIRACY and has threatened suit if the emulator gets out. Real user-friendly, this company!

Mihocka is trying to get around this objection by devising a program that will extract the required data out of the user's own 8-bit ATARI machine, port it to the ST, and integrate it into his emulator... but even this may not be satisfactory to ATARI. "They tell me that it will encourage piracy..." says Mihocka, who contacted ATARI about his work when XANTH (a Seattle area software company, remember BOINK?) expressed commercial interest in the 8-bit emulator.

All is not lost, perhaps. Mihocka is rewriting many routines into 68000 machine code (as he had to do for printer support, as the ST does not have the 8-bit type daisy chain cable). If he is able to replace enough routines, the speed of the emulation will dramatically increase, and the need for the ATARI ROM will decrease. Then, BIG JACK won't be able to say much about the emulator.

We thought it was unfortunate (and even ATARI seemed to agree) when APPLE was uncooperative about ROMS for the MAGIC-SAC MACINTOSH emulator. Now the shoe is on ATARI's own other foot and they are being just as difficult. Let's hope this one can be resolved aboveboard. Write to Jack Tramiel and tell him what you think of his company's opposition to the development of what many of us have been waiting for - a way to

avoid losing all our hard-earned software when we buy the ATARI ST.

Atari's Response (from Neil Harris and Alex Leavens, edited):

The 8-bit emulator, aside from legal ramifications, does not address some fundamental problems, the main one being, how do you load in 8-bit software? You need to somehow interface the 1050 disk drive with the ST, no small task. To the best of my knowledge, the biggest problem we have with Darek's emulator is that he's seen fit to post it as PD to bulletin boards all over. Our ROMs are not PD. I don't think anyone will argue with that. We have talked to him. Several times. Each time we've politely asked that he refrain from doing what he's doing, and that if he ever finishes the product, we'd be interested in seeing it. He responds by claiming that we are attempting to stomp him, put him out of business, and restrict the free flow of information. We are not doing this. We have no desire to stomp him - the only thing we want him to do is stop distributing our copyrighted software.

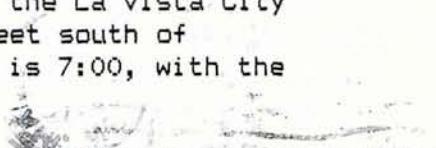
Note that this case and the Magic Sac are quite different: In the case of the Magic Sac, Apple was claiming that Dave could not legally read the Mac ROMs on any machine other than an Apple machine. In our case, we are not telling this person that he can't write this emulator, or that he can't use our OS to do so. What we ARE telling him is that our OS is copyrighted software, and that he may not distribute it or sell it.....

*** CLUB OFFICERS ***

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NEW MEETING DAY AND LOCATION
WEDNESDAY JUNE 10
AT THE LA VISTA RECREATION CENTER

The Omaha Atari Computer Enthusiasts (O-ACES) will now be meeting on the second Wednesday of the month. Our new meeting location is the La Vista Recreation Center located at 8116 Park View Blvd., behind the La Vista City Hall and Police Station. Park View Blvd. is the next street south of Harrison when approaching from 84th street. Meeting time is 7:00, with the general meeting beginning at 7:30.



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